

Reading Booklet

2019

Key Stage 2 English Reading

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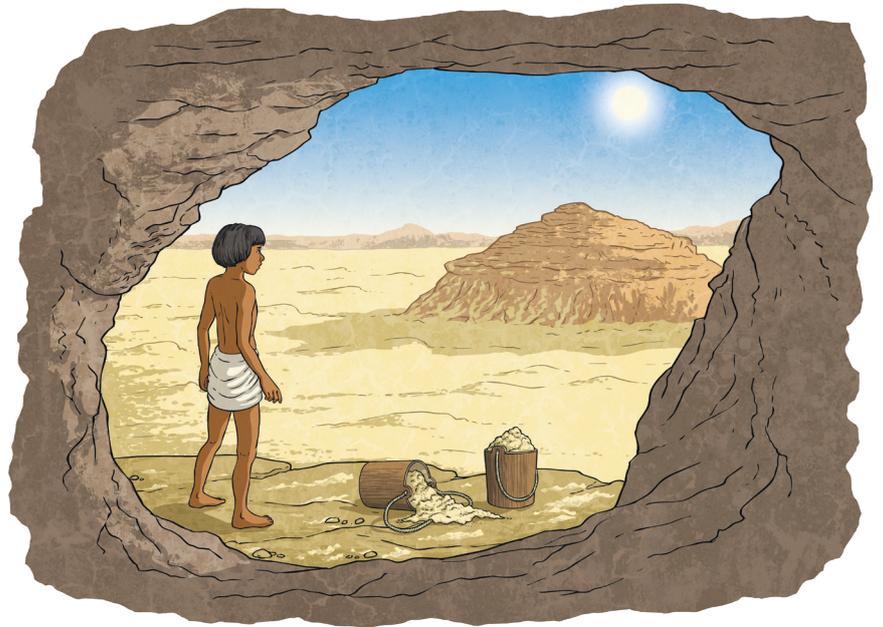
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Three Mistakes



Kef dusted himself down and crept out of the cave. He looked around, shielding his eyes from the glare of the sun. From this position in the hills, he could see the great Nile river as it meandered heavily through the valley below like a slow, winding snake. “That’s good,” he thought, “not too far away.” He grabbed his two wooden pails and tipped out the sand, wondering how long he had been hiding from the sandstorm. It had come out of nowhere, pushing him sideways and stinging his eyes. It was the strongest wind he’d ever known, separating him from the others. Instead of joining hands to find shelter together, Kef had panicked, turning blindly into the storm to find his own place to hide.

That had been his first mistake.

After finding the cave, Kef had prayed to Shu, god of wind, asking for forgiveness if he had angered him in some way. He felt ashamed that he had abandoned the others and hoped that they were alright.

Kef looked up. The sun had moved to the west and there wasn’t a wisp of cloud in sight. He’d left the village at dawn but the position of the sun told him it was now mid-afternoon.

His mind turned to his father, who had been working in the darkness of the great tombs for over a week. Today, he would return home and Kef did not want to disappoint him. Along with the other boys, it was Kef’s job to replenish the water in the village. His father would be home by the time Atum – god of the setting sun – had sunk low onto the horizon; his daily sunset painting the land with a crimson glow. It meant Kef hadn’t a moment to lose. He pushed away the wall of sand that had gathered across the cave’s entrance and scampered out, dragging the pails as he half-ran, half-skidded down the rocky hillside.

The water felt crisp and welcoming when Kef eventually arrived at the Nile’s banks; he crouched low, splashing his face and arms. Stepping in, he cupped his hands and brought the water to his lips again and again. His mouth was so dry after the sandstorm and the sun had been so

Three Mistakes

hot that it had burnt his feet. But now, every stinging whip of sand and every burning step felt worth it. The great Nile was Kef's favourite place to be and, as he lowered his body beneath its shimmering surface, he couldn't help but feel like a pharaoh bathing in the Field of Reeds. Holding onto the pails, he stretched and pushed out with his feet, allowing his body to drift towards the deeper part of the river. The water felt colder here but it was still so refreshing. Kef turned onto his back and allowed the current to pull him gently. He knew he had to get back; he knew he hadn't the time to relax but it felt so good. For just a moment, he closed his eyes...

That was his second mistake.

Just like the sandstorm, the creature came from nowhere. One minute he was drifting peacefully with only the sound of rippling water in his ears, the next he was being dragged below the surface, underwater roars bubbling and surging through his head.



Everything happened so quickly. Kef was aware of something incredibly strong pulling and dragging him, tossing him this way and that. He thrashed wildly with his arms and legs and the creature released him from its clutches. Kef swam to the surface and took a desperate breath of air. Water was in his eyes and the sun was sparkling sharply off the river's surface but he could just make out the dark figure of the crocodile. It was half-submerged in the water beside him; white froth bubbled forcefully from its mouth as it snapped and chomped at something between its teeth.

Kef kicked out and twisted away, using all of his energy to propel himself towards the banks of reeds, using them to pull himself in. As he did, he glanced back – just for a split-second – to see the open jaws of the crocodile hurtling towards him with surprising speed. Kef turned, yanked hard and threw himself towards the land. Water surged against his head and back as the crocodile lurched onto the river bank, a mere arm's-length behind. Kef rolled over and scrambled to his feet, almost tripping over the long reeds. He took two steps... three... four... before hitting the hot sand and collapsing to the ground.

Breathing heavily, Kef lifted his head. The crocodile glared at him from the river's edge, half in and half out of the water. Kef didn't move. He just lay there, breathing wildly with the sand

burning against his skin.

The crocodile blinked as it slid backwards into the river. Within moments, it had disappeared into the depths of the great Nile. Kef sighed. His heart was racing as he tried to gather his thoughts. What was he thinking swimming alone? He thought about what his father might say and felt ashamed.

Kef looked up. The sun had lowered even more towards the west. He needed to get back. Hauling himself up, Kef felt his body for wounds. There was nothing; he couldn't understand. The crocodile had dragged him underwater. It must have bitten him somewhere. Kef prayed to Khnum, thanking him for sparing his life, before turning his attention to his two pails. He needed to fill them with water and return to the village as soon as possible. If he didn't, his family would have nothing to drink.

He looked around but could see only one pail lying limply by the water's edge. He stepped closer. The other pail was in pieces in the water. "That must have been what the crocodile was chewing on," Kef thought.

Kef sighed. He felt defeated yet relieved. He had lost one of the pails but he felt thankful. If it wasn't for the pail, the crocodile would have bitten **him**. It had saved his life. He dipped the remaining pail into the glistening Nile and headed back towards the village.

Hours passed. Even though there was only one pail, it was harder to carry without the other to even out the weight. The sun had lowered but the heat remained. Every step burnt as Kef stumbled over sand and rock, desperately trying to get back before nightfall.

As Atum slowly melted into a low, crimson glow, Kef stumbled again. Feeling dizzy, he lowered the pail to the ground, mindful not to spill a drop of the water. He hadn't taken a sip the entire journey, such was his determination to bring as much water back as possible.

That was his third mistake.

When Kef awoke, he was on his bed with his father sat next to him.

"Father?" Kef said, sleepily.

"Good evening, Kef," his father replied.

Kef rubbed his head. "What happened? The water..."

"Safely received, thank you," his father said. "The other boys found you at the top of the mountainside with the pail of water beside you, which is remarkable in itself."

"Remarkable? I don't understand. Are you not angry that I brought only one pail back?"

"Angry? The other boys brought home none! Not only did you beat them back but you brought

water for the entire village.”

“The entire... what do you mean?”

“Everyone has had their share, Kef. Here’s yours.” His father held out a small cup and Kef drank it all at once. “It is enough water for everyone for tonight. As soon as Ra’s light shines in the morning, the boys will return to the river.”

“But...”

“Well done, Kef,” his father said, proudly. “You saved the village. I don’t know what happened but the gods must have been shining down on you today.”

Kef sat back and remembered everything that had happened: the sandstorm; the hot, beating sun; the broken pail; the crocodile; falling unconscious...

“Goodnight, Kef,” his father whispered, lowering himself to kiss his son on the forehead.



That night, Kef slept well. He dreamt he was with Sobek – god of the Nile crocodile – drifting along the river with all the other crocodiles swimming peacefully behind. The great Nile was Kef’s favourite place to be and, as he swam beneath its shimmering surface, he couldn’t help but feel like a pharaoh bathing in the Field of Reeds.

The Gods

The ancient Egyptians lived long, long ago;
three thousand years counting or more.

With farm land to tend and vast crops to grow,
and pharaohs to give their lives for.

The Nile gave new life and the sun's rays beat down,
over deserts all covered in sand.

The great kings – they reigned with a throne and a crown,
but all men knew gods owned the land.

Sobek was fierce with a crocodile's head;
with deadly teeth just used for biting.

His sweat formed the Nile that flows out to the Med -
he was also a god who loved fighting.

God of the Earth, whose laughter caused quakes:

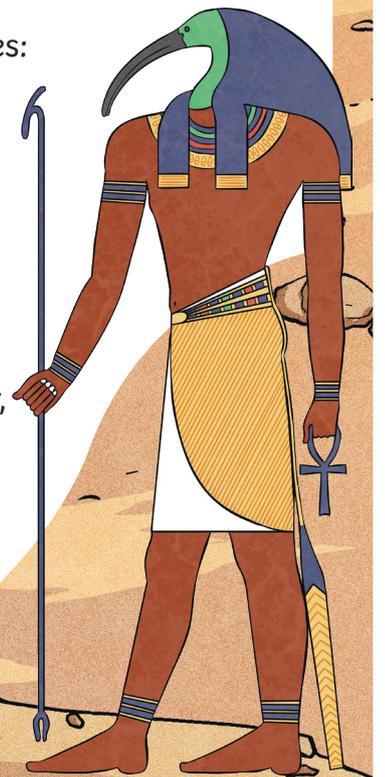
Geb with his sea-filling tears.

A lumbering giant, the father of snakes,
grew crops through his seasons and years.

Thoth was the moon-god; the cosmos-creator,

He balanced o'er evil and good.

A writing-inventor, a world-educator;
a god of baboon brotherhood.



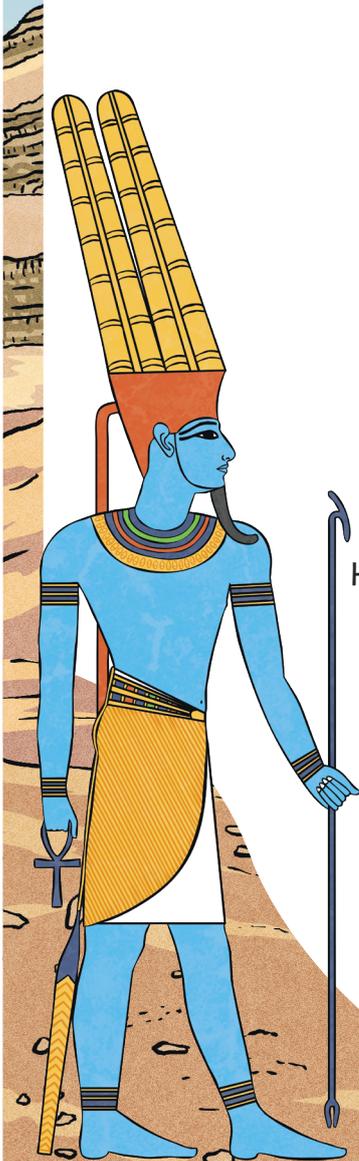
Set loved disorder, violence, delusion;
o'er deserts and great storms he ruled.
Slew his brother, **Osiris** and, in the confusion,
vengeance and war he had fuelled.

Isis was goddess of marriage and magic,
wisdom and motherhood, too.
Mourning her husband (Osiris – so tragic),
she gave life to a privileged few.

With the head of a falcon, the god of the sky,
Horus's dad was Osiris.
He defeated his uncle, though losing an eye,
so the hieroglyphs say on papyrus.

The embalming god with a black jackal's face,
was **Anubis** – the god of the dead.
He weighed sinful hearts in an underworld place;
to the afterlife, good souls he led.

The defining god of Egyptian belief,
was **Ra**, the god of the sun.
He joined up to work with another big chief;
the mysterious, hidden **Amun**.



Together becoming the ultimate being;
the formidable **Amun-Ra**:
the 'King of the Gods'; immense; all seeing;
the maker of sun and all stars.

These are the gods of the ancient Egyptians;
prayed-to, beloved, adored.

Their powers, traditions and every depiction
worshipped and never ignored.





Fact or Fiction?

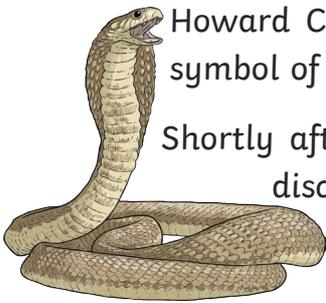
The Pharaoh's Curse

In 1922, the 3000-year-old tomb of the great pharaoh, Tutankhamun, was discovered by archaeologist, Howard Carter. It was an astonishing discovery and news rapidly spread across the world. Suddenly, everyone wanted to know about pharaohs, pyramids and everything else associated with ancient Egypt.



Something Strange

However, soon after the tomb's discovery, unusual occurrences began to happen.



Howard Carter's canary was reportedly killed by a cobra – the ancient Egyptian symbol of monarchy. This sparked local rumours of a curse.

Shortly after this, people mysteriously started to die. A year after Tutankhamun's discovery, the man who funded the expedition, Lord Carnarvon, became gravely ill. Some people believed that this confirmed that the supposed curse was real.

Newspaper Stories

Many people found the idea of a pharaoh's curse both frightening and fascinating; it unsurprisingly fuelled many stories in global newspapers. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, a popular Victorian author, wrote that Lord Carnarvon's death had been caused by ghostly 'elementals'.



Arthur Weigall, an Egyptologist and journalist, said that he had watched Lord Carnarvon laugh and joke outside Tutankhamun's tomb just six weeks before he died. When it happened, Weigall was reported to have turned to a fellow reporter to utter the spooky words, "I give him six weeks to live."

In 1925, the archaeologist, Henry Field, explained how Howard Carter's friend, Sir Bruce Ingram, was given an ancient Egyptian paperweight as a gift. It was shaped like a mummy's hand with a scarab bracelet on its wrist. On the bracelet were carved the words:

Cursed be he who moves my body.
To him shall come fire, water and pestilence.

Not long after receiving the gift, Ingram's house suffered a terrible fire. When it was eventually rebuilt, the house then suffered a great flood.

In all, eight people who were present when Tutankhamun's tomb was discovered died within 12 years. It seemed as though the pharaoh's curse was real.

The Truth

However, the curse doesn't seem quite as frightening when the facts are looked at more closely.



Although eight people died within 12 years of the discovery, there were 46 others who lived long and healthy lives – including Howard Carter himself. Lady Evelyn Herbert, who was one of the first people to enter the tomb, lived for a further 57 years.

Additionally, Lord Carnarvon's death was not quite as sinister as it was made to appear in the newspapers. The truth was that he had been suffering from poor health before the expedition and actually died from a mosquito bite.

Surprisingly, some people even suggested that it was Howard Carter himself who created the idea of the curse to scare intruders away from his amazing discovery.

Whatever the truth behind the pharaoh's curse, one thing is for sure: it made for a fantastic story.